

Manual handling training courses

Basic requirements

There is no prescriptive guidance at present on what a 'good' course should include or how long it should last. However, a suitable course should typically:

- be suitable for the individual, tasks and environment and use relevant examples. This will usually mean that it needs to be industry-specific. It is not acceptable to demonstrate lifting regular-shaped cardboard boxes in a spacious room if the task involves lifting irregular-shaped packages in confined spaces, for example airport hold loading;
- last approximately half a day or more; anything less than one hour is not likely to cover all the relevant information.

Content of a suitable course

A suitable course would also include:

- some basic information about the anatomy of the spine and muscular system and how injuries occur;
- the key risk factors for manual handling injuries relating to the load, task, environment and capability and how those factors present in the particular industry and workplace;
- how to avoid manual handling and reduce risk factors;
- factors relating to individual capability should include the capability to adopt posture required for safe lifting, eg bending the knees;
- basic principles of safe moving and handling and how those can be applied in that particular industry and workplace, taking into account local factors such as specific tasks and workplace and wearing of PPE etc (this should enable delegates to deal with unfamiliar operations through basic understanding of the principles of avoidance and safe lifting techniques);
- demonstration and practice of lifting and handling techniques such as planning the lift, feet position for stability/balance, posture, keeping load close to the body, moving feet instead of twisting the trunk;
- demonstration and practice in safe use of lifting equipment if applicable;
- practical work to allow the trainer to identify and remedy any unsafe practice demonstrated by trainees;
- what the company procedure for reporting injuries is and what action will be taken if a member of staff is injured.

Other issues

Other things to look for include:

- whether the trainer asked for information about the company and specific identified risks before starting the training. If a trainer has not asked these questions it is likely that the course will not have been tailored to that company and, while it may cover the basics, it may not have made the course applicable;
- sufficient records to show who has been trained, what was covered in the course and when;
- a planned programme of training to ensure all staff are trained with a system to ensure that they actually did attend.

This document is part of a pack and is not available from HSE Books